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ABSTRACT

Prewriting, critical probe questions, and post-writing-recasting for plural audiences-(audience-relating) are three tactics that can be used in research paper instruction to help college students gain skill in "real world" writing and in critical assessment of issues and evidence. The prewriting tactics of freewriting, listing specifics, and free-associative meditation are guided by stimulus questions. The second tactic, probe questions, can be tailored for specific groups. For freshmen, the following eight-point probe works well: (1) definition, (2) relevance, (3) factual orientation, (4) issues of interest, (5) interdisciplinary orientation, (6) moral dimension, (7) public policy and practice, and (8) critical reading and thinking. The third tactic, recasting the paper into different forms and for different audiences, emphasizes real world writing. Thus, these approaches have goals in terms of the research paper itself, the writing act, and education as such.
(JL)

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UPGRADING THE RESEARCH PAPER TOWARD "REAL WRITING"

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BY USING PREWRITING PLOYS, CRITICAL PROBE-QUESTIONS,

AND AUDIENCE-RELATING

I. Introduction

What about the research paper and the "newer" composition--and liberal education as against rote instruction? Seriously overdue is the revamping of research-paper instruction to incorporate two kinds of "real-world" writing (process and audience) and also a perennial kind of true education (critical assessment of issues and evidence). Regrettably, the research paper is still often taught "wheelbarrow" style--mainly the uncritical amassing of correctly-documented facts, but unrelated to the student's self, the writing process (including readership), and to any thoughtful assessing of those facts.

This report presents three ways to augment the research paper enterprise thus (and by so doing, also to enable the research-paper assignment to teach these writing and thinking skills reciprocally). These units were developed, tested, and seasoned over six semesters in English 102, Freshman English (long paper unit), at a medium-size state university between 1978 and 1981.

In brief, the three tactics are these. (1) Before researching, the student does personal prewriting, to produce astute questions. (2) During research and writing, the student uses eight clusters of

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sophisticated, critical probe-questions to interpret and evaluate sources--and issues, not simply report on them. (3) After writing the main paper, the student recasts its substance to varied, "real-world" audiences and purposes, in a series of shorter papers.

The techniques seem to exceed common research-paper practices thus:

(1) As for pre-research activities, many teachers do offer lists of topics for papers, also have students write informal opinion-drafts on a subject as a matrix for the paper. But prewriting of the right-brain type: freewriting, free-associative meditations, and stimulus-questions. Common in "newer" writing courses today, this may seem irrelevant for the research paper--but only at first.

(2) Also, critical probe-questions during research and writing are not unknown. Many teachers employ the problem-cause-solution format, or the testing-of-hypothesis approach. However, students come to the course quite unaware of how elusive truth can be, of how dubious the range of opinions can be. The research paper can teach students, not just facts and research methods, but also how to investigate any controversial, complex subject or issue--even the regrettably well-worn topics of marijuana, vegetarianism, abortion, UFO's, nuclear power.

(3) And "post-writing" echoes another key emphasis in composition: writing for occasion: for purposive effect upon target-audience. Most classroom themes and essays are written not even communication, but pedagogy, to learn or prove mastery of course-content. Their audience is similarly unreal: the teacher as examiner, specifically a "captive

expert," nobody who must be gained-and-retained. However, when we write in the so-called real world, we write for a particular audience. Once again, some teachers do have students write post-paper personal reports on their experience with the paper, or perhaps a brochure or chapter or article from it. But more can be done here.

Each of these three approaches can be, of course, used independently of the other two. And each works well for most subjects of the four major types, as follows. They probably work best for (1) "current controversies" (nuclear power; metric system; abortion; gun control; censorship; and the like). They work virtually as well for (2) topics of "personal-pragmatic" concern to the student (dieting; stress; other health matters; divorce; accounting as a profession; evaluation of consumer-equipment; and so forth). They may apply somewhat less dynamically to (3) historical concerns and questions (the more static issues, perhaps, of early Quaker history; last days of Hitler; development of color TV or snowmobiles or automation; the Chicago fire, the San Francisco earthquake). And they do not especially aid (4) purely literary research papers of scholarship and criticism (except for adapting discussions of poems and novels to various audiences, as we shall see).

II. The First Approach: Prewriting

The student uses "prewriting" to discover a specific topic, also key questions about that topic to ask of the library sources.

The following probe-questions, which are free-associative invention of the right-brain mode, are increasingly common in process-oriented

writing courses. I used them for personal-exploratory papers; then in one class I tried it as prelude to the formal-investigative research paper. That class found the technique felicitous indeed, as have all subsequent classes (post-unit questionnaires have unanimously approved). Students found that prewriting quickly identified what issues they wished to explore further. Prewriting hence smooths the path to the library.

The prewriting tactics are four. (A) Nonstop "freewriting." (B) "Listing 50 specifics" about the subject. (C) "Free-associative meditation": doodling or drawing-down random associations of personal recollections, facts, questions, general responses to the topic. (D) The following stimulus-questions, to channel the above tactics.

(1) "Scan your own biography." Examine your prior observations, and experiences in re (the topic) by looking back in time and space to your earliest recollections of it, so as not to miss connections between it and you.

(2) Play "doubting Thomas." List a few commonly-accepted facts, and beliefs, concerning the subject. (Thus, "Nuclear power is safe if precautions are taken." "Nuclear power is vital to our future energy supply." "Nuclear power poses insurmountable waste-disposal problems.") Then, of each, speculate: Is that true? Totally true in all cases or not? Indeed, really true at all? What ways of knowing and types of sources would confirm this; and what would opponents say?

(3) "Personal Probe." Ask yourself: why are you really concerned with (the subject)? What do you really think and feel about it--as

against what you think you think; should think; think you should think?
 What is your most prominent pet peeve or preference-or-prejudice
 regarding it? What is your main puzzlement or bafflement, bewilder-
 ment regarding it? And are your reactions static, or altering?

(4) The subject and certain human emotions and issues. What about x
 as a dynamic challenge, a contest: with dangers problems conflicts
 fears uncertainties risks, but also rewards and goals? What about
 x and beauty pleasure satisfaction, also perfection: what would be
 the utopian, "ideal" x and can it exist and if not why not? What about
 moral evaluation: x as good/evil; also, of superior/inferior quality?
 And what about conventional vs. original formats or versions of x?

Thus far the prewriting. Students will need coaching in it, of
 course, at some point or other in the course. This is because the
 right-brain mode of emotional associativeness lies poles apart from
 the left-brain mode of rational logic which dominates formal education.
 In structure, this kind of prewriting is circular and saltating--not
 sequentially linear. In pace, it is unhurried and deliberative--not
 lock-step and even-paced. In judgmental attitude, it's markedly
 receptive, and never instantly-critical; it seeks a rich dump of raw
 material, an abundance from which to winnow only subsequently. Above
 all, the angle-of-approach is passive-receptive--not active-aggressive.
 The writer is wire conducting the electricity of the emerging ideas--
 not excavator yanking them out.

But a right-brain approach to a research paper enterprise,
 actually works. I assigned business-major students to prewrite on

the following sample research topics. These students thought they had something--but not really much--to say or to ask about these topics. Through prewriting, they produced the following topics, more significant than usual ones:

(1) MONEY. "Economic impact of returning to the gold and silver standard." "Computerized robbery today." "How much does the love and pursuit of money control and affect human lives and cause problems?" "What about the vogue for using the barter system today: prevalence of it, also benefits and drawbacks?" "How expensive are national holidays to taxpayers?"

(2) WORK. "Pros and cons of labor unions for workers today." "Impact of mid-life career changes on self, family, friends." "Success in work and meaningfulness of life and relationships--any connection?" "Impact of education on peoples' motivations in their careers?" "Secrets of job interviews: why employers do and don't hire people."

(3) FAMILY. "Future trends of marriage and the family--varied ideas and options and so what?" "The shift toward women doing men's jobs--consequences?" "City and country living: effects, if any, on the families?" "Do certain family types and conditions produce criminals?" "How do changes in the economy really affect families, in all ways?"

Other assigned topics I've used for practicing prewriting have been the weather; food and nutrition; housing; communication breakdown; and others. The most fruitful results do occur, of course (space prohibits depicting them) when students finally do prewrite on their self-chosen topic.

(Note that one can attend to "occasion,"--precise purpose, exact audience--even here, after prewriting and before critical source-reading.) I remind students of possible purposes for writing the research paper--or any paper:

(1) To learn research methods I: finding basic library resources, then mastering the notecard-footnote-bibliography techniques.

(2) To learn research method II: writing an expository discussion of a subject--issue, proposition, etc.--with unity, coherence, and emphasis, including clarity in paraphrasing and summarizing sources, and correct mechanics.

(3) To learn "shirtsleeves epistemology," how "truth" on any controversial topic is complex and elusive, and "opinions" may be opinionated.

(4) To write not just exposition, but objective evaluation: scrupulously assembling "all" the evidence and arguments both pro and con x and its issues therein, then judiciously assessing same, then concluding with truth, not illusions. (Nuclear power: safety and efficiency and other factors--as discussed by professional, and popular, sources.) This relates to testing a hypothesis about x and proving, qualifying, or rejecting it--the scientific method in effect.

(5) But even at this stage, to write to audiences different from the writer's own self, and/or the teacher-as-examiner. Possibilities here include "the class"; or lay-novices who need their poor knowledge of the subject updated and/or clarified; or those hostile or indifferent to x; or those who specifically need to know more about x; and so on.

(Residents of the area of a proposed nuclear power plant? Biology majors? Ninth-graders?) I rarely have students write the research paper as such, for a definite audience--that's usually too much too soon. But I do raise the issue of audience thus now, since we'll return to it in fuller face later.

III. The Second Technique: Probe-Questions for Assessing Issues

Following probe-questions from standard heuristics for invention; from guidelines on critical reading propagandistic and fallacious material of many sorts; and from social science's relativistic insight that different groups will see the same "social problem" diversely.

The student considers the following probes before and during research and writing. I steer different types of students to different approaches, custom-tuning assignments via these probes. Some below-average students can only gather and arrange facts minimally (Sec. #3 below). Social-activist types may ferret out propaganda and bias on an issue. Some more intellectual students "shirtsleeve epistemology," studying how truth on an issue is cryptic and elusive, opinions suspiciously manifold (both in #8 below).

In any case, the following eight-point format works well with freshmen, according to the reports of several classes via anonymous post-unit survey-questionnaires. The only caution remains to warn the students on the rules-tools issue. That is, the following are not rigid rules. (Theoretically, a rule must "always" be followed, but usually guarantees success.) Rather, they are flexible tools (to be used--or not--as aides, heuristically, when and as they're needed).

Unless forewarned, many freshmen tend to grind through all the following mechanically, feeling confused if "all" don't "fit" their particular subject. So I must warn students that these questions are neither models nor guarantees. Rather, they are arsenals which can assist if used with selective judgment. (Moving from fixed rules to flexible tools is of course a component of liberal education itself.)

(1) DEFINE the subject. (Differing definitions: dictionary, popular, etc.) This is useful when writing to lay-novice readers on topics such as stress, indoctrination, androgyny, sexism, biorhythms.

(2) RELEVANCE? Also, PROBLEM-CAUSE-SOLUTION. Why is the subject noteworthy, significant--and to what particular group or audience? Do your varied sources show writers from different value-groups and lifestyles approaching the topic differently? (As for nuclear power: businessmen, environmental activities, and the like.) What are the many causes of the problem? (See #5, "interdisciplinary," below.) What possible solutions do various sources suggest? Which are proven, which untested, which controversial? Which would result in a dilemma or no-win situation? What do the opponents of each suggested solution argue in its stead?

(3) FACTUAL ORIENTATION: DESCRIPTIVE OVERVIEW. (A) Description of x, including statistics: "x in the nation today." (237 nuclear plants in existence; total costs; etc.) (B) Classification of x into the larger scheme of things (all sources of power) and Division of x into its component subparts (different types of plants, reactors, processes). (C) Comparison-and-Contrast of X with Y (for many purposes:

sheer description, also exploration, evaluation, decision-making).

(Nuclear vs. coal, and solar energy?) (D) Time-and-Space Context:

trace the past history, sketch the present picture, and project the future trends and developments in re x. (Earliest plants; national and worldwide use of nuclear power; future trends and projections.

Also, Cause-and-Effect study of x, especially its results, both manifest (recognized and intended) and latent (covert and perhaps undesirable).

(4) Keystone ISSUES OF INTEREST in re x. Identify all relevant issues: points of interest and concern, problems and questions your audience would want to see discussed for scrupulous treatment of x.

(Obvious nuclear issues include "safety." Sub-issues of that comprise plant workers; area residents; waste-disposal; sabotage. Other issues include technological complexities; economical effectiveness-or-no.) Assemble facts, and arguments, on "both" (better, "all") sides of the issues.

(5) INTERDISCIPLINARY perspectives on x. Each academic field of knowledge offers not only factual findings, but also certain "perspectives." These are the angles-of-vision each field offers: not just its subject-matter and usual problem-issues, but especially its methodology and key concepts for explaining things. It is high time that we enriched teaching of composition, and thinking, with this plural-perspectives approach. Students can be taught how to combine the powerful viewpoints (not just data) of varied fields, to help interpret issues more fully--to describe, explain, evaluate and assess, even predict and manage. (For instance, alcoholism seen via the

perspectives of economics, history, biology--and so also vegetarianism; the metric system; education and schooling; of course nuclear power; and so forth.) Almost old-hat in intellectual inquiry today, the interdisciplinary approach is still overdue for arrival in many classrooms.

Here is a capsule roster of each field's perspectives, plus working concepts.

PHILOSOPHY: issues of reality, knowing, valuing.

RELIGION: the supernatural and sacred; also, issues of ultimate concern.

LITERATURE AND FINE ARTS: x (the subject) and authentic insight and enhanced consciousness, presented through aesthetic form and language.

HISTORY: "to better understand x now, see the past-in-the-present; trace continuities, but also changes, between then-and-now."

BIOGRAPHY: great and influential individuals and x.

PSYCHOLOGY: internal, individual dynamics of needs, motivations, drives, adjustments, mental health and illness (intrapsychic effects of Three Mile Island).

SOCIOLOGY: culture pattern and social structure as influential; also, key working concepts of roles, norms, mores, group dynamics, conformity and deviancy, social control, acculturation, institutionalization, taboos and sanctions, mobility.

ANTHROPOLOGY: cultural relativism's concept that behavior and beliefs vary widely across cultures and must be seen in functional context to be interpreted.

POLITICAL SCIENCE/GOVERNMENT: power, law, authority and x.

ECONOMICS: production, distribution, consumption of goods and services, and x.

TECHNOLOGY: mechanization; industrialization; practical application of science.

LINGUISTICS/COMMUNICATION: barriers to communication; stereotypes of x.

GEOGRAPHY: climate, soil conditions, natural resources and x (locations for nuclear plants and waste-disposal sites; locations of raw materials).

BIOLOGY: genetics, heredity, growth-and-disease, life-processes, and x.

For mastery, students should briefly practice this approach. I give students some short readings (paragraphs and pages) which happen to use well the plural-approach method to fully interpret varied subjects. (These include the Mississippi River, the fall of Rome, causes of crime and of migration, a Chinese porcelain vase, and the like.) We discuss them briefly. I then have students briefly try to apply the way of thinking by writing paragraphs on topics assigned (diamonds, computers, nutrition) or self-chosen (even "blue jeans" and "thunderstorms," in fact). Then, of course, the student tries to seek and use plural perspectives when she/he reads library resources and writes the research paper.

(6) MORAL dimension: VALUES-CLARIFICATION. What sources say that x is good and/or bad? Moral and/or immoral? And by what standards

of judging (absolutes? relativism? etc.)

(7) PUBLIC POLICY AND PRACTICE. What should these be regarding x, and who says--again, by what standards? (Current statutes on the books? Majority opinion, be it tyrannical or not? Legislation of morality vs. individual liberty?)

(8) CRITICAL READING AND THINKING: SURVEY THE RANGE OF CURRENT KNOWLEDGE, AND OPINIONS ABOUT X. It's here that "shirtsleeves epistemology" can bloom.

The questions below can show students that valid facts, truth and opinion do not automatically spring from the sources we read, and arrange themselves clearly on a research paper's pages. Rather, the factual "truth" about a topic is both complex, and elusive. And attitudes and opinions are humanly various--bias-laden too. #8 below can help the research paper become more than "sandheap empiricism," uncritical amassing of facts. Rather, the paper can become critical assessing, of actual thinking.

Consider. Even when the student's topic is only so regrettably-mundane matter such as the 55-mph speed limit, or pros-and-cons of deer hunting management let alone gun control and UFO's and such--still, truth is elusive. Among professional and popular sources, we find a tangle of contradictory and incomplete statistics about what is known, plus also a welter of conflicting opinions and judgments about what should be done. The sources will likely include some solid data and clear-headed thinking, but also fact-free claims; fudged or outdated or out-of-context "facts," often contorted with logical fallacies; skimpy

overgeneralizations; fond recitals of cherished group ideologies, also personal prejudices or pet peeves, also honest self-delusions (garden-variety rationalizations), knee-jerk responses by blustery provincial types, and officialistic bigwig pronouncements thinly covering up the vested interest of power or profit motives; and so forth.

But what's the fledgling researcher to do? When first confronting this jungle of half-truths and half-baked opinionations, the average student can't cope, can't divine what is solid truth, and what is probably hogwash; what is valid, vs. false-front, opinion. Regarding factuality, my students at first can only respond by genuflecting in front of a show of statistics: "Well, the writer backs the argument up with facts"--even if jerry-built. The student is still unaware that clearly-differing "ways of knowing" do exist, to help us measure facts; that only "current expert summations" on a subject can hope to be valid; and that even these can conflict, or can be incomplete requiring that the student "suspend judgment." And regarding opinionation, my students at first can only dissolve into over-receptive relativism, saying "well, who's to say which is right." The student is still unaware that differing types of bias can be identified clearly.

The questions below help speed the trek towards truth, by helping the student to sort out truth from sham; sift out firm opinions from flimsy. Thus the questions can help avoid the too-usual research paper merely trying to "cover" enough of the sources to get some representative glimpse of the subject. Often this is as uneducational as mere hoarding, not assaying. Once again, students will be helped here

by previous course-unit dealing with logic, fallacies, lying with statistics, and the like.

(A) KNOWLEDGE: "the truth as complex and elusive." The student reads the sources to sense (1) What are "our" current IMAGES and beliefs about x as revealed by the sources? (Consider different groups by age, sex, race, religion, occupation, social class, and differing roles, including psychopolitical stance.) And which of these images do the sources seem to be saying are "the truth" about x? Which totally false? And which as stereotypes with a complex admixture of grains of truth amid falsehoods? Can your sources reliably clarify and correct "our" mistaken images, update our outmoded impressions? Or do the sources war among themselves?

(For example: "our" notion of Native Americans as "lazy and drunken." Note the apparent grain of truth there, in re reservation alcoholism at least. But note also the interdisciplinary complexities: other causes being cultural disorganization maybe genetic factors too, let alone simple cultural differences in the valuation of work and leisure.)

Current controversies offer up many fine notions to be tested critically thus. "Sex education in schools increases sexual activity!" "Seat belts really do kill people; my aunt knew a person who. . . ." "Marijuana does/doesn't cause genetic damage." "Homosexuals are not 'contagious,' but they do molest children--or do they really?--and they do seem to try to convert others. . . ." And nuclear power?

(2) WAYS OF KNOWING. The student reads the sources to see what the following major "modes of knowing" seem to be saying about x--and

also how reliable each mode is for the subject and purpose. Science (meaning only "current representative expert summaries" of research and consensus on x). Religion. Culture: traditional ideologies and folk-wisdoms, "what everybody knows" (sic) about x. Current majority opinion, as known from polls. Statutes, the laws regarding x. "Expert authorities" on x, but of what ilk?

(The above seems obvious, even elementary. And yet, virtually all current freshmen, at my school in any event, seem to lack awareness of these plural modes as such, each useful, each partial. Many would freely as soon trust their minister, or "what I feel"; or some dubious "expert" bearing "facts" and the like, regarding (say) nuclear power-- instead of "current representative expert summaries." The mood today is profoundly non-scientific indeed.

Then the student should use the sources to assess the issue, as follows. He should ask: (1) on what issues regarding x do we now have apparent certainty, "the evidence in" at last, the experts in consensus? (Lurid reports of marijuana's reefer-madness effects are now discounted.) (2) On what issues do the experts currently disagree, but lean toward a probability? (Marijuana as not damaging chromosomes, perhaps.) (3) On what issues is the evidence conflicting so much--or still lacking--that more studies are needed and on which the experts, and therefore we, must suspend judgment? (Marijuana and hormone production, also the immunological system.) Thus can the research paper approach a reliable report indeed.

(B) OPINIONS: ATTITUDES AS MULTIPLE AND SUSPECT. MUCH "REASONING"

AS RATIONALIZING FROM ROOT-REASONS. (1) The student can also try to flush out diverse opinions; to discover, not just whether "people are for or against x," but more subtly how many varying opinions emerge regarding x. He can rank these on a sliding scale from strongly hostile--mildly opposed--neutral/indifferent--mildly favorable--totally partisan and accepting.

(2) Then the student tries to evaluate these attitudes. What are the reasons people give to believe thus? And are such arguments sound, or biased--and if biased, because of what "root-reasons" which may underly their formal arguments and introduce bias? For, we all surely rationalize (unconsciously find facts to support our prior cherished opinions) far more than we reason (fairly assess facts and then arrive at solid opinions). (Not that we usually acknowledge this fact about human nature.) Six common "root-motivations" which foster rationalization seem to be:

- Simple factual ignorance, producing stereotypes and misconceptions about x.
- Simple just-personal pet peeves or preferences of the individual writer.
- The violent opinions of a far-out extremist group, perhaps lunatic fringe.
- Vested interests: business, government elements seeking power and/or profit.
- The culture's ideologies: cherished implicit assumptions, national values.

-- Psycho-political stances: between conservatism, and liberalism-radicalism.

Thus, one's sources may tout, or damn, marijuana because of personal bad, or "good," experience; membership in NORML, a pro-drug lobby; authoritarian, or for that matter anarchic, personality type; honest (mis-)belief that marijuana inevitably leads to heroin use; or the older national notion of marijuana as an exotic, killer drug. . . . And students who read widely on social issues in popular sources as well as just professional and scholarly ones, will find the path to truth to be darkly brambly indeed, and the cacophony of opinions apparently without reason--a veritable circus of evidence. But let the student read popular and even "suspect" sources--as illustrated below--to study, not just "the facts about a topic," but the very skill of sifting truth from falsehood:

(1) Nutrition. A syndicated newspaper column by Jean Meyer, Professor of Nutrition at Tufts University. The special-interest magazine Vegetarian Times. Also a piece entitled "Food Thing," by "Mick & Lini," in The Mother Earth News, a slickly-done organ for drop-out, back-to-nature types. A letter to a newspaper condemning meat-eaters as uncivilized barbarians. Pamphlets from the National Meat Board. Studies in the Journal of Nutrition. (Science; extremist groups; psychopolitical stances; vested interests.)

(2) The Metric System. An editorial in Science magazine objectively evaluating pros and cons of metrication for America. Diatribes against metric in Co-Evolution Quarterly, also The Spotlight (a tabloid

attacking liberal bureaucracy in government). Early British objections to metric as an unnatural, French imperialism. A letter to a newspaper finding seven objections to metric. A U. S. Government report by a commission. (Largely the same ways of knowing and root-reasons as #1 above).

(3) Ecology and the Environment. Rachael Carlson's The Silent Spring; early hostile reviews of same by the scientific community itself. A brochure from the Chemical Manufacturers' Association helpfully putting the entire issue in reasoned perspective. . . .

(4) The 55-mph Speed Limit (correlatively, Motorcycle Helmet Laws). Studies by safety institutes. Articles and editorials in Car & Driver magazine, also Cycle. Pamphlet from an anti-helmet lobby. Newspaper letter proving that helmets cause more trouble than they avoid, and are unconstitutional too. Articles in Transportation Quarterly. The opinions of friends who "drive/ride a lot. . . ."

In case students find it difficult to apply these probe-questions on truth and opinion, one can do a brief exercise to show how they (and questions from the first seven types too) can insightfully open up various subjects. For instance:

- "Sex education in schools." (Factual bases; range of opinions; problem-cause-solution; public policy and why?)
- "MX missile system." (Factual bases; possible biases--military, nationalistic, liberal; scientific evidence; objective evaluation)
- "Evolution vs. Creationism." (Factual bases; rationalizing due to psychopolitical conservatism; ways of knowing; differing

policy standards)

-- "The Equal Rights Amendment." (Our images, vs. the facts?

All possible issues involved? Resistance due to traditional cultural ideologies? Interdisciplinary cause-and-effect regarding the legislation? "Who is the problem" here?)

IV. The Third Augmentation:

Post-Writing Recasting for Plural Audiences

Composition today increasingly emphasizes so-called "real-world" writing, in contrast to the "schoolroom" writing the archetypal "five-paragraph theme" (let alone the traditional research paper). Many composition teachers now feel that the typical classroom "theme" risks remaining wildly unrealistic as a writing act, in terms of purpose and audience. The concept of occasion--writing for target audience, to a specific purpose--is a vital one, as vital as the concept of process not just final product.

These teachers feel that the "purpose" of the typical classroom theme is not communicative so much as pedagogical: to prove content-mastery to the teacher (who is an artificial audience anyhow, being a paid captive expert). But so-called real-world writing must communicate, must achieve precise purpose of the writer with diverse audiences. Purposes vary. Beyond exposition, they include analyzing; arguing a case; instructing in how-to; possibly entertaining and attitude-sharpening; and others. Audiences vary, too. Beyond the teacher-as-examiner, they include readers near and distant; some ingroup experts, others lay-novices; some partisan, others hostile.

Still, too often the research paper is compartmentalized, not connected with other units. Which is a pity; students may thus be deprived of writing experience. For, the paper itself completed, they can now use it as base or core for writing more on the subject. They can now reshape and adapt the material into briefer papers, written to varied specific audiences, for varied purposes.

The magazine feature-article format can offer students a triple dimension. The writer can include the formal research (documenting informally, in the text itself). But she/he can then add to it one's own personal experience and reactions. Also (if now relevant) one includes "field work"--interviews, participant observation.

For instance, a student wrote on "shoplifting." First, she had done an anecdotal personal essay on her experience as a store manager. Then, she did the research paper on the same topic, writing a factual summary-overview of the problem. But finally, she then wrote a feature article, which melded the vivid anecdotes from her first essay with the research paper's statistical information. Intended audience: "the class," fellow students as shoppers and workers.

Incidentally, this Janus-faced approach seems a happy way to heal the schizophrenic split between the formal essay and the subjective essay--a twain that does not meet often enough.

We can suggest to students varied purposes for these post-papers:

(1) Summary Overview: to tell a lay-novice audience "all about" the topic in brief compass. Although textbooks say "limit your topic," real-world writing does include the encyclopediac introductory brochure.

This can involve describing past-present-future trends; clarifying misconceptions; and updating old images. (Thus, we could write briefly "all about" diamonds, computers, or vegetarianism for a general audience.)

(2) Objective Evaluation: to identify all the issues in re the subject. Then assemble all the data-and-arguments pro and con each issue. Then assess, and judiciously conclude. (Vegetarianism: how valid, and/or deficient is it--in re nutrition; taste-appeal; economy; efficiency of preparation; social image or status; psychological and moral satisfaction. . . .)

(3) Personal Essay: to explore-and-express the writer's opinions in re x--ideally, matured by research. This can become a position paper/sharing of viewpoint/opinion-piece. ("I think extreme vegetarians are not truly as moral as they contend because they ignore the argument that the plant or vegetable world also has life-qualities. . . .")

(4) Argument: to convince a target audience to try vegetarian foods, if only temporarily. (Audience: college students. Or, outdoors people and nature lovers. Or students with certain values and lifestyles. Or, parents. But a different slant for each.)

(5) Instruction: ("how to cook beans-and-rice efficiently; kitchen skills for the beginning vegetarian cook.")

In addition to purposes, audiences can vary. The following grid can help students realize meaningful target-audiences--and experience at last how precise limited readership and exact specified purpose can marvellously invigorate writing, make it cleanly effective, and can

equally make novice writer able to decide stylistic choices when writing. Regarding distance from writer, we have the writer's self, "us" the class, the teacher, larger known bodies (family, friends, relatives), university officials, agencies, special interest groups, and the like. Regarding knowledge of subject: peer-expert to lay-novice. Regarding attitude to subject; partisan to hostile. Regarding different groups; the gamut, including age, sex, religion, region, educational level, occupation, philosophy, and the like. (Thus one can write to feminists; business executives; students majoring in a particular field; church elders; highschoolers; and so forth.)

Too, the different everyday genres may stimulate writers. Thus, one can write letters of complaint but also commendation, suggestion, recommendation, and the like; papers for another course; brochures for campus groups; and the like.

It's clear that students can post-write thus on subjects of "current controversy": this includes sex education, censorship, nuclear power once more, evolution vs. creationism, UFO's, and the like. One instance will suggest others. A student researched metrication, wrote a good research paper objectively overviewing all the issues pro and con. He identified most of the research's biases and misconceptions--on "both" sides--about America's going metric. He then post-wrote four shorter papers, employing his research with a light hand. (1) An anecdotal personal account, somewhat humorous, of his family's first experiences with the metric system while vacationing in Canada last summer. (2) Instruction to a particular group (high school science

students) in how to use the metric system. (3) Arguing in favor of metrication: audience, those who are hostile or indifferent for rational reasons, plus sheer ignorance. (4) Exposition: cause-effect analysis of resistance to metrication as a social problem--audience, the teacher of a social problems course the student was currently taking. His research paper bore fruitful offshoots thus.

Also, students can obviously post-write on subjects of "personal-pragmatic" concern. (These include matters of health and disease; careers and vocations; personal adjustments and interpersonal relations; consumer products and equipment selection; and practical procedures involving food, clothing, housing, finances, education, and transportation.)

Making sure that students choose topics germane to them, has produced good research papers on matters such as divorce, stress-management, dieting, a relative's malady, accounting as a career, and the like. But the post-writings are equally rich. One student selected "college fraternities," a potentially-insubstantial topic--but wrote a well-researched paper on the history, current status, and arguments pro and con such groups. He then evolved other papers to write: (1) a judicious objective evaluation of the pros and cons of joining these groups: audience, incoming freshman business majors. (He related to their curiosity, pragmatism, and values too.) (2) A condensed, simplified history of fraternities locally: audience, the fellow active members of his group. (3) Polished instruction as to how to benefit best by fraternity membership: audience, new members. (4) Summary overview,

plus argumentation, in favor of these organizations: audience, parents of members, plus personnel officers of corporations. (The student nicely cast this last argument in dramatized form, a "tale of two students," one of whom joined a Greek group, the other deferring.) Especially gratifying in this quartet of post-papers was the student's wrestling with--and triumphing over--real problems and challenges of slant, stylistics, tone. §

Admittedly, many traditional research-paper topics seem less amenable to such post-paper recasting. These involve historical-factual issues and literary topics. Even these, however, can sometimes be audience-related. (One example: after doing research papers on poetry, a freshman class wrote short interpretations to varied audiences such as highschoolers; teachers of poetry; family members; business executives; even members of sports teams and the like.)

V. Functions of the Three Approaches

The following recaps the goals of this three-fold augmentation of the research paper.

(A) Primarily Concerning the Research Paper:

(1) Seeking factual truth: the facts do not automatically import their correct interpretations; but we can use key questions to probe and clarify.

(2) Seeking valid opinion: critical reading of a spectrum of sources can reveal both blatant and covert bias; but awareness of root-motivations and the like can help us avoid a sense of total babel.

(3) Seeking enriched research: we can augment library research

with our own personal concerns, also field work including observation and interviewing.

(B) Primarily Concerning the Writing Act:

(1) The skills in a composition course are comparatively few, but they deserve repetition and reinforcement--and the research paper unit can provide that.

(2) Right-brain, free-associative prewriting is not a creative luxury, but can speed the journey to writer's control of subject in diverse types of writing.

(3) Outside of "classroom themes," often not true writing at all, most actual writing is a matter of occasion: audience, purpose, genre or outlet. And writing for occasion, powerfully shapes writing as such, adds to writer's success.

(4) The keystone skill of writing is autonomy: the writer's own internalized initiative, ability, and judgment--not the passive following of rules and awaiting evaluation of one's writing from an outside authority.

(C) Primarily Concerning Education As Such

(1) Good assignments achieve a difficult balance between rigidity and chaos. They are not too explicit as models which do not challenge students to see and think more, but they do guide students and do not abandon or confuse them.

(2) A good unit of study will be adaptable to students of differing needs and abilities and interests. It will serve all goals all the way from merely competent assembling of material, to mature assessment

of that material.

(3) Liberal education involves not simply returning answers to an authority, but learning how to ask the questions for oneself; not following rules as assigned, but self-selecting tools as appropriate; not seeking "the one right answer" via convergent thinking always, but appreciating plurality; relativism; diversity; situations and conditions; complexity.